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Dearest Children : letters to America from a Jewish family in Berlin in 1941

Translated from the German and
edited by Martin Teich-Birken,
with a foreword by William Birken.

Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For Thou art with me.

The 23rd Psalm of David,
King of Israel.

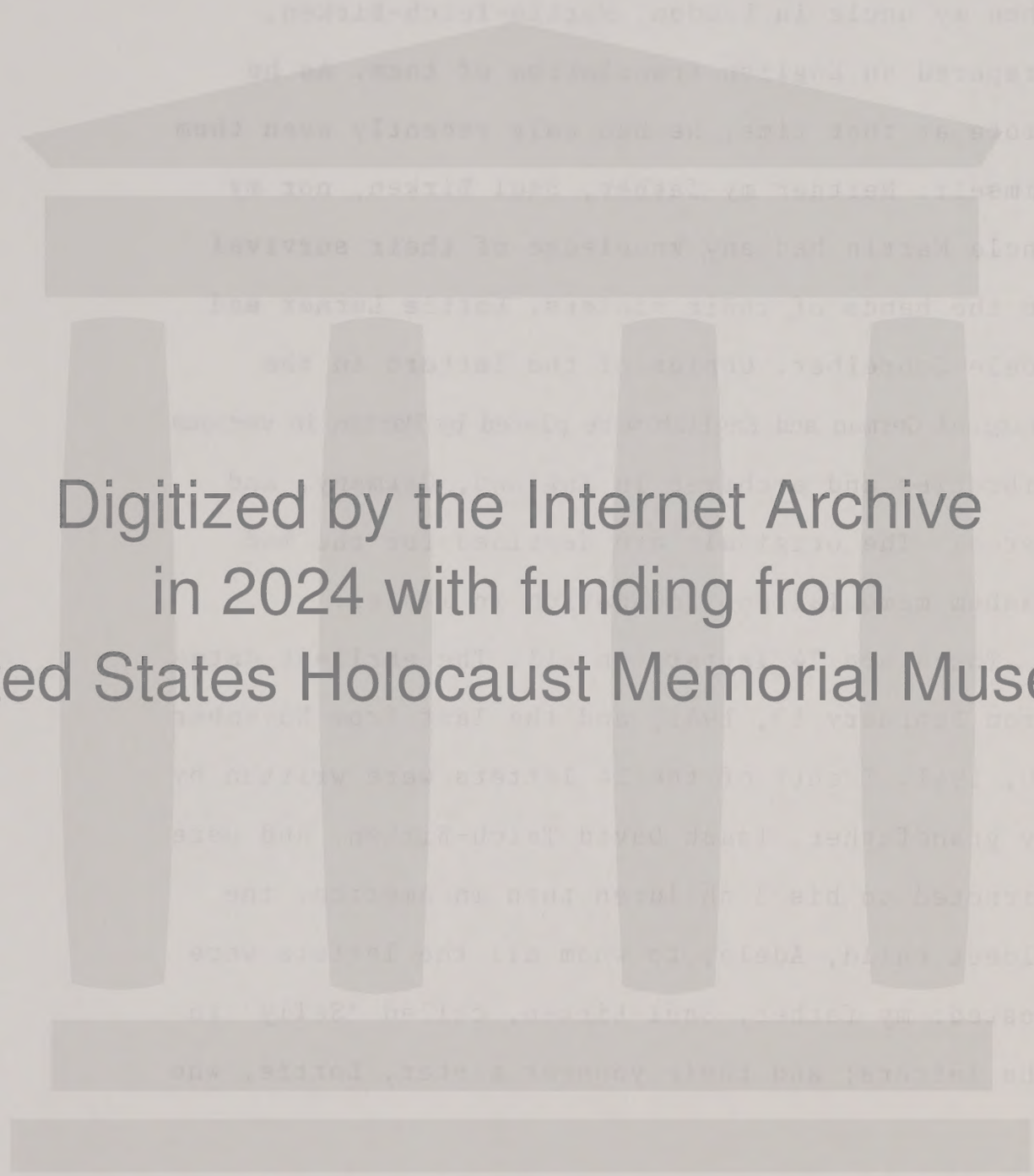
"We put our faith in G'd come
what may. We have long since
resigned ourselves to our
fate."

Isaak David Teich-Birken,
Berlin, September 13, 1941

Foreword

I saw these letters for the first time in 1992, when my uncle in London, Martin-Teich-Birken, prepared an English translation of them. As he wrote at that time, he had only recently seen them himself. Neither my father, Saul Birken, nor my uncle Martin had any knowledge of their survival in the hands of their sisters, Lottie Lerner and Adele Schreiber. Copies of the letters in the original German and English were placed by Martin in various libraries and archives in England, Germany, and Israel. The originals are destined for the Yad Vashem memorial and foundation in Israel.

There are 24 letters in all. The earliest dates from February 13, 1941, and the last from November 20, 1941. Twenty of the 24 letters were written by my grandfather, Isaak David Teich-Birken, and were directed to his 3 children then in America: the oldest child, Adele, to whom all the letters were posted; my father, Saul Birken, called "Sally" in the letters; and their younger sister, Lottie, who



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was living with Adele at this time. All the letters were sent from the family home at 33 Rosenthaler-strasse, in Berlin. They were received by Adele and Lottie at two Bronx addresses in New York, 2526 Valentine Avenue (where my father also lived before entering the American Army), and later at 853 Elsmere Place. The family had planned that their youngest child, Martin, then in England, would join his older brother and sisters in America, but German U-boat activity in the North Atlantic prevented this, to the anguish of his parents who continually worried for his safety.

The last letter in the collection written by my grandfather, which was not necessarily the last letter he wrote to his children, bears the date September 26, 1941. Three subsequent letters relating to my grand-parents' situation and fate, were written by Mrs. Rosa Timberg, a close friend of the family. Her letter of October 11, 1941 was particularly wrenching: "Papa and Mama have become very depressed and are crying their hearts out for you, all day and every day, and are now filled with grave doubts, that they will ever see you

again." One week later, on October 18, 1941, my grandfather and grandmother, along with many other Jewish Berliners, a number of whom were elderly and in poor health, were deported to the Jewish ghetto-prison of Łodz in Poland, re-named Litzmannstadt by the conquering Germans. From Łodz, where they must have spent 3 months of the kind of misery and despair that drove many to suicide there, they were 'resettled' to the death camp at Chelmno, probably on January 16, 1942. Chelmno had no living quarters. None were needed, since most prisoners were killed within a few hours or a day of their arrival, usually in sealed trucks with the exhaust re-directed back into the truck. Even had my grandfather the opportunity to write in October 1941 and thereafter, it is unlikely that he would have been physically or emotionally able to. He had written as long as he could.

The letter of May 23, 1941 is particularly intriguing. Undoubtedly the first two missing pages were written by my grandfather, but all that remains is the added note to my aunts by the unidentified "Lissi". Whether these pages were removed by the German censors, lost en-route,

or separated and/or misplaced after arrival, is an unanswerable question, yet it reminds us that this was a world at war where entire letters could easily disappear. What is more remarkable perhaps is how many letters of my grandfather were actually delivered. His criticisms of his childrem as poor correspondents should be tempered by the awareness that some of their letters may have never gotten through to him, just as some of his may have never gotten through to them. Lissi's letter also reminds us that an entire network of friends and family, on both sides of the Atlantic, used my family's correspondence to learn news of their own friends and family, who were either in New York City or Berlin. Lissi's was just one case of this sort of letter piggy-backing. The most moving example of this writing network was Rosa Timberg's last haunting letter to my aunts, which they were asked to pass along to Rosa's family in New York.

Binding all the letters together were my grandparents' efforts to secure American visas, so they could rejoin <u>all</u> their children in America, including

Martin, whom they prayed would arrive there soon. They had not seen any of their children since Martin's departure for England in August 1939. They hoped that by having 3 children already in New York, gainfully employed, their application for American visas would go more smoothly. When this did not happen as he hoped, Isaak found his family the butt of some ridicule by other Berlin Jews. Yet the plan had merit and a good deal of success. After being pulled apart by circumstances in Germany, the three oldest children finally did make it to New York after great struggle. My father Saul came directly in 1938; Lottie from England in 1939; and Adele from England in 1940. They had all left Germany at different times as well. For the first time in 3 years, my father, Adele, and Lottie, were living under one roof again in early 1941. The family's reconstitution of themselves in America could only increase the desire of their parents to be with them once again. The growing success of my grandfather's long-term plan may have diverted his attention from other possible options for the personal safety of himself and his wife.

It is clear from the letters that a number of the family's friends and acquaintances in Berlin had found new homes in Latin-American countries. The understandable fixing on an American reunion may have been a mistake at this time. As my grandfather was learning, American visas were very difficult to obtain in 1941, and virtually impossible after July of that year. Only briefly, towards the end of the letters, does my grandfather mention the possibility of emigration to Cuba. Yet, even here, it is difficult to fault him because he had already made one unsuccessful attempt to emigrate to Cuba in 1939. There was finger-pointing on both sides in the letters, as to who was more responsible for the failure of their emigration plans. In truth, there was little that they or their children could do to alter events at this particular time. Even money would have been of little avail at this late date. Affluent Berlin Jews died alongside more humble ones like my grandparents.

The essence of tragedy is victimization by forces which you are powerless to control. My grandfather and grandmother were caught in an impossible situation. None of us

would want to go through what they went through. These letters deal with matters great and small and there is something universal and even noble in my grandparents' efforts to proceed with the more mundane pleasures of life, like Mutti's cooking secrets, with as much normalcy as they could. While these letters have a special relevancy for our family, and particularly for me who never got to know my grandparents, they have an obvious historical value as well, a first-person account of what it was like to both live through and die in one of the great cataclysms of Western Civilization. Yet, if it is possible, I think these letters have an even greater importance and value as documents of the human condition. Knowing the eventual fate of Mutti and Papa, these simple words rise to an almost elegiac level by opening a window into the life and soul of the condemned. They are as beautiful and moving, as they are terrible, and they make me proud to be the grandson of Isaak David and Martha Teich-Birken.

WILLIAM BIRKEN
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
September 2000

Dedication and acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to our dear parents ISAAK DAVID & MARTHA TEICH-BIRKEN as a Memorial and in thankfulness for having given us the light of life, while theirs was so cruelly and painfully extinguished. The existence of the original letters my parents wrote to my sisters in New York until October 1941 has only recently been brought to my knowledge. The reason why they were not sent on to me at the time was because censorship in the United Kingdom during the war was very stringent and these letters would certainly have compromised me. My brother Saul was similarly affected, as he was serving in the American Forces and had to wait until he came home on leave. It was for this reason that he could not write to them. This complaint was mentioned on more than one occasion; nor could they understand why I never wrote to them.

This book has been compiled with the full

agreement and support of my sister Lottie Lerner of Lenoir, North Carolina, and my brother Saul ("Sally") of Delray Beach, Florida, and would not even have been possible, had my deceased sister Adele, of blessed memory, not preserved the letters so very carefully. It is to be hoped that these documents will help enable future students and researchers in providing an insight into that traumatic period. Here I would like to mention that Dr. K. Sühl's letter of 26th June 1989 spurred me on to this task. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Christa Wichmann, Chief Librarian, Wiener Library, London, for the time and guidance she has so generously afforded me.

MARTIN TEICH-BIRKEN
London
July 1992

Editor's introduction - Hereunder a description of an average living standard of a lower middle-class Jewish family in Berlin from the turn of the century to the outbreak of War.

I am MARTIN, the fourth child of the Mastertailor, ISAAK DAVID BIRKEN (TEICH) and of MARTHA (neé EICHNER)[1], born on 11.5.1922 in Berlin N. 54. My father came to Berlin in 1903 as a 17 year old from Sieniawa, Galicia (at that time Austria-Hungary); my mother a little later from Krakow, Galicia. They married on 28.8.1910 in Bodenbach, Bohemia. A son was born in 1911 and died within a few days, reason not known. Adele was born 18.7.1912[2]; Saul 18.6.1913; and Lottie 27.9.1916. My father served in the Austrian Army. After the war he began the manufacture of gent's clothing and soon attained a standard of living of the lower middle-class. He could afford to send Adele and Saul to a Lyceum/ Gymnasium (the equivalent to private public schools in Britain), while Lottie preferred the apprenticeship of a milliner.

In 1927 my father acquired German citizenship. Until then he held the name BIRKEN (Teich). At the naturalization

[1]My father was born on 3.7.1886; my mother on 12.3.1886.
[2]Adele died in Margate, Florida on 25.1.1985.

he had the opportunity to change his name and duly adopted TEICH-BIRKEN as his 'new' name. This had as a consequence, that my sisters and brother were known as BIRKEN and I went through school as TEICH. I now carry the name TEICH-BIRKEN. The aftermath of the inflation and coming economic crisis of 1931 had left its mark. That and the Hitler period has contributed to my school education being only that of a Council school standard.

In April 1938 my brother Saul left for the United States. Lottie and Adele went as domestics to England in December 1938 and March 1939, in order to await their American affidavits. Soon after their arrival they tried to get me an English permit and I received mine in June 1939. I did not want to make use of it until the emigration of my parents was secured. There was talk at the time that visas to Cuba could be bought. On the morning of the 10th August boat tickets for the passage to Cuba arrived, and as with the arrival of these their emigration seemed to be assured, I left the very same evening. Although saying good-bye is always a

sad occasion, and especially from parents, it was some consolation that soon we would all be together again. Cynically and fraudulently, HAPAG, the German steamship line, sold tickets even to people without the required visas.

My parents were among the first Berlin Jews to be deported to Łodz (Litzmannstadt) on October 18th 1941, and from there with the first transport to the Extermination Camp Chelmno in January 1942. The deportation card and the transportlist bear witness to their removal to Łodz. Their final journey to Chelmno was confirmed by Heini Wachs, an inmate of Litzmannstadt ghetto, who wrote to his sister, Rosa Timberg, in late January 1942: "The Birkens have gone on their holidays". Heinz ("Heini") Wachs was in a position to know this because he had also been deported to Łodz in the first transport from Berlin, on October 18th. Rosa Timberg's letter to my sisters and brother, written on October 11, 1941, makes reference to this: "Heinz and family will soon change their address". That now makes it obvious why Mrs. Timberg wrote at the beginning of page 2 of the original letter: "Papa and Mama

have become very depressed". One must assume that they had, by that date also, the order to report for deportation. Once at Łodz, the so-called "Western Jews" were kept together and somewhat separate from other Jews in the ghetto. The dating of Wachs's letter suggests that my parents went with the first transport to Chelmno on January 16, 1942, rather than the second transport to the death camp, which left on January 29th. The ironic references to joyous events like going on holiday, moving to a new home, or even weddings, were the only recourse Jewish correspondents had if their letters were to make it through German censors. Truthful news of such horrid happenings as deportations and deaths was completely forbidden and would have endangered the already endangered letter-writers. Apparently, the irony of such news was lost on their captors and these coded messages were allowed to go through, if only to show the world that the Reich was treating its Jews with kindness and compassion, all rumors to the contrary. Nearly all the letters received from my family in Berlin had German censorship numbers pencilled in at the top. The truth was far worse than could be said.

First letter of February 13, 1941

Dearest Children,

In the letter of the 29.12.40 you complain that that you have not received any mail from us, although I write regularly every week. Well, it can not be my fault then, rather today's times in which we live, but it is also possible that the cold weather is also responsible for it. This is the only reason, I am sure. Hopefully, in the meantime you have received some mail. We, however, can not complain in this regard. We received within 3 weeks about 6 letters. And now again about our emigration. I hope that you have received the telegram about the renewal of the affidavits and to send your own, as well as proof for the passage. The task is, however, a very difficult one and is a hard nut for you to crack; yet I hope that you will manage it all in good order. Three weeks ago it looked so very rosy at the Consul, as if from now on everything will go through much faster. The picture has changed

considerably this week. The issue of the visas have been denied even to people who have already their medical, with the excuse that the overseas quotas have been exhausted and that there is a temporary halt until March 1st. This happened to Mr. Fleischer, who had his medical on January 30th and he did not get his visa. That is what one calls 'hard luck'. He was already greatly looking forward to an early re-union with his daughter.

Dear Adele, this week we had a visit from Heinz, we naturally passed on your greetings. You should wait for him under all circumstances. He is quite well. Your letters we have, of course, not shown to him. On the whole he is the Heinz you left behind. A lady acquaintance of his will shortly leave here for overthere. She will look you up, but don't take it too seriously. About Martin's coming to you, there seems no news. Although he is alright, we are very, very worried. Were he only with you already.

Dear Lottie, we hope your cold is much better

by now and that you are alright again. I had actually quite forgotten to reply to your dreams. You write that you dream very often about us, and that we look good and young, and you then ask whether I dream about you. With all certainty can I confirm, that I dream more than I sleep and I always have the feeling that I am with you. I really long to have a good old row with you again. This I miss very much. And this I am determined to do, should we soon be re-united again. I will make up for lost time. When you read these lines, you will probably be upset, but don't worry, your Papa has decidedly changed. You would not recognise me, so tame have I become. Nothing can upset me any more. I know you will laugh at that, but it is so. Life teaches you everything.

As already said we are well. We are alright. Family Bickel are still living with us. Everything is still the same with us. Nanny and her family are also well, so is Dora and Lotte Schorr, Bertha and her children. All send their love. This is

actually all for today. Dear Sally, so that you do not feel left out, the rubbish that I wrote is also meant for you. I know that you have very little time and I did not want to take up too much of it, only one thing I would ask you: do not miss out on anything I have asked you to do in my telegram and I hope to hear from you very soon in this matter. At the same time, all of you, keep well. We remain with all our love and many kisses to you, Uncle Simon, Aunt Rose, as well as all the children and grand-children. Do not forget Mr. Rubin and family Rosenzweig and Miss Holzmann.

Now I can confirm the receipt of the letter of January 16 and are happy to hear that you are all well. Please give our regards to Family Löffler, also to Max and family. We are very pleased by Martin's well-being. We send him our love and kiss him a thousand times. According to my knowledge Mrs. Twiaschorr has already visited Mrs. Horwitz. Your buying-slip we have studied very conscientiously. I find your prices not

cheap at all. Here, most things are much cheaper. Now you would like to know the recipe for a gateux and the cravattes. Hereunder, I will describe everything. First of all listen. Mutti gives as ingredients for a Nutgateux /continental measures/:

½ pound nuts or almonds
½ " semolina
½ " sugar
1 baking powder
1 lemon grated-rest to be squeezed in
1-2 eggs with milk stirred into it

Everything mixed together to a thickly pulp.

Cravattes recipe as follows:

2 eggs, ½ pound flour, 2 soupspoons sugar, one tot of rum or arak aroma to be added, then kneaded like noodle-dough, a pinch of salt, dough slightly rolled out, thicker than for noodles, cooked in palmin , cut into 4 cm. wide strips, 8 cm. long hole, then pulled through at the other end.

Bon Appetit!

Dear Adele, Mutti thinks this is not an easy

task, it is all a matter of experience. In spite of this Mutti hopes that you will be successful. Important is to grease the tin well. Mutti is already restless and wants me to give you another one as well.

Semolina Gateux

½ pound semolina
½ " sugar 2 eggs beaten into a froth
1 baking powder, 1 lemon grated, rest to be squeezed out with a little milk and water.

Mixed to a thick dough, tin well greased.

For Chocolate Gateux, the same measures to be used. Good Luck!

Cheese Cake

1 baking powder, ½ pound of flour, 150 gr. fat, ½ pound sugar kneaded to a tight dough.

1 pound cheese, sugar according to taste, 1 egg, rum or arak to be added. With all recipes add a pinch of salt. Should you really be successful, we would like to see

a sample. Now it's time for me to stop with my nonsense and remain once again with much love and kisses,

Mutti Papa

How is Martin's boss? We would like to hear from her.

Second letter of February 20, 1941

Dear Children,

Your letter of the 16th January I have, in part, already replied to. I have noticed that there must be another letter somewhere, but the one of the 6th January arrived today. We were very happy to read that you always have many visitors. We would be happier still, if we were already that far, that we could partake at their visits. Perhaps we will have the good fortune that our emigration will soon be translated into reality. From the Hilfsverein* we have received this week a copy of Sally's telegram. Is the offer of 450 dollars for the passage a fortune? Unfortunately, everything involves so much trouble and expense, but it has to be done. I think if the papers were here already, it is not unlikely that everything would come to a successful conclusion much swifter.

Uncle Simon must surely enjoy the new circle of relatives and friends. He was, after all,

*Aid Society

for the last few years only concerned with his own immediate family and did not mix with the wider family. This must, now, surely have brought a greater interest in his life. That Max has not yet written one line astonishes us greatly. Perhaps the reason might be that he has not yet found the right living accomodation.

Dear Adele, your cuisine sounds very nice. Meatloaf, veal-roulade and some of the other things, very nice, but must be quite expensive. Mutti is already looking forward that you don't want her in the kitchen. About that, we will see. We hope you had a good time at Sigi's wedding and wish you to be the next.

Dear Lottie, your lines I have read very thoroughly; only I do not know what'turbans' are? Has this got anything to do with your trade? Your salary seems quite reasonable, 4.50 dollars per day! We hope that you still have this job. Thank you very much for the greetings from Max Sachsen-haus and please return the same from us and wish

him a speedy recovery. This illness sounds very serious to me. How is his brother Isaak? Does he live with him? What do you hear from Martin? We are always anxiously waiting for the longed-for telegram that he has arrived, alas sofar in vain. The main thing is that he is well and that his visa did not expire. Please send him our dearest love and many kisses. Actually, I have got no more news and I am very tired by now. Nanny thanks you for your regards as well as Dora, Lotte, Bertha and they all send you theirs. We also send our dearest love and kisses and hope for a speedy re-union. Regards to uncle and aunt as well as all the family, Max and Rosa and the little baby and wish them only one thing: the little-one may bring them great pleasure. Mrs. Neumannn and family Besser,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

My dear ones, while visiting your dear parents I am taking the opportunity to write a few lines

to you. Dear Adele, as to your recent arrival, I would like to wish you much luck, as well as to Max and family. At least from you I get to know how Max is keeping, as we do not get any mail from him. I am very pleased that you are all well, and that you have a pleasant home and that you get on so well with each other. Please G'd that Martin should soon be with you and your dear parents as well. From me I can tell you only very little. My husband works very hard, but one has to be satisfied if one has one's health. The children go to school. Fanny is top of her class. Theo is less diligent. Our dear father is with Frieda and is well. We send what we can, as Frieda is dependent on it. Sonja is in Yugoslavia, on the way to Paula. Have you heard from Paula? Regards to Sally, you and Lottie, uncle and family, Max and family and all relatives, yours, Nanny

Dora and Lotte also send their regards.

Third letter of February 28, 1941

Dearest Children,

For the last 2 weeks we are without mail. We are therefore very nervous, particularly as we are waiting for our new papers. Although at the moment there is a temporary stop on the issue of visas, but is supposed to start again on March 1st. To your letters of 9/1 and 16/1, I have already answered everything and I would not know what to add to them. Mrs. Ringel goes next Thursday to her children in Montevideo. To Aunt Felscher I have sent our regards. This does not cost anything and she will have our pleasure. Then also the father of Mr. Popelwauer, my former adviser at the Hilfsverein, is leaving for Bolivia. So I sent my regards to Uncle Josef in Lima through him. Mrs. Danziger thanks you, dear Adele, for your regards and she would like to hear something from her husband. Otherwise she is well. Hannchen, your sister Rosa would also like to hear from you. She comes very often to see us. Mr. Josef

Fleischer was supposed to board his ship on the 20th March, but he still has not got his visa. I wonder where Nathan might have got to? Sigi's wedding has by now taken place and we are very keen to know how everything went? Have you all attended? Have you met Kurt Klappholz yet? What else is news? Do the Spritzer brothers visit you? How we long to be with you again! In seven weeks time is Easter. Already last year it was our wish to celebrate together. Unfortunately, it did not materialize. So let's hope again that we might have the good fortune to be together again by Whitsun time.

What do you hear from Martin's new job? Is he still not able to come to you? Today is Thursday evening 10:45 and we are now going to bed. I will continue tomorrow. In the meantime it is Friday and still no mail. We will wait for the afternoon post. Should there still not be any from you, there is nothing left but to send this letter off. In any case I really

have not got any news to impart. We hope that you are all well and earn a lot of money, although money was never my master. But now we need every penny because the journey in front of us will not be very cheap and yet, were it, that we would be that far already? We are lately experiencing great bouts of longing for you all, more so than ever before. There is still no mail in the afternoon post, so that I close my lines with our love and kisses, also to Martin, Max and family, Mrs. Neumann, Uncle Simon, Aunt Rose, Lillian and husband, Cecelia and family, Emmanuel and family, Miss Holzmann, Morris and family. Although you write very little about the rest of the family, I have them all in my head. Not to forget family Rubin. Keep well,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Nanny and family, Dora, Lotte, Bertha, Martin send their regards, so does Mrs. Trompeter. Also regards to family Zucker.

Fourth letter of March 3, 1941

Dearest Children,

Today we received your letter of 29th January. With great joy have we noted that you are keeping well and healthy, the same of which we can report from us. We are also very pleased that Martin is alright too. My dear Adele, you write about Martin visiting Hertha Freiburg and Paul very often; who actually is Paul? How is Martin's boss, Mrs. Englander? Her mother, Mrs. Neumann, comes to see us almost every Sunday, also Mrs. Unger. The sister of Hannchen, Mrs. Rosa Timberg, also comes quite often to us. To the Kulturbund* we do not go anymore, as we have not the patience right now. Every minute is spent only in connection with our emigration, although the majority of the work will only start when we have all the necessary documents together. Tomorrow, the 4th March, I have asked for an appointment, just to keep up with the latest news and requirements. We assume that

*Club for Cultural Activities

Sally has sent all the documents and that they are in order.

Now, my dear Adele, you have just had a lot of excitement. A wedding so soon after your arrival is more than one could have really expected, particularly as it was Sigi's. We are very happy about that and wish you all to be next. Naturally, we would have wished to be there too and only hope that this wish may be granted us very soon. It is very pleasant to hear that you always have visitors around. This is of course connected with some expense but should not really matter at all. That Jo and Jack don't visit you, seems to me that they really want to get on their own feet by themselves and do not wish to burden you. I do not think there is any other reason, as opposed to their brother Hermann, who has always been a mother's boy and perhaps more attached to people. The boys have always been like that, they will come back on their own again. Have

you spoken to the sisters Katz yet?
Mr. Fleischer hopes to get his visa tomorrow, 4th March. Today is a lovely day and does this make one feel much better. Mutti has visited Mrs. Lauterman on Saturday, she sends her regards. Also Mrs. Timberg asks how her son Josi is? Nanny and Wolf and children are so far alright, so is Dora. Lotte has at the moment a bit of a sore throat. Bertha and Martin are fine. Sonja has left to go to her Aunt Paula. We are all very pleased about Max's little baby, particularly as it is supposed to look like you. As you can see, I am answering promptly, but I really do not have any more news. We send you all our love and kisses and stay well. In five weeks time Easter will be with us again. Regards to relatives and friends,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Fifth letter of March 11, 1941

Dearest Children,

Your letters have become rather rare lately and we are very worried about it, especially in view of our expected papers. We would now like to get closer to our emigration. The fact is that many people now get their papers approved quite quickly, provided their documents are in order, Daily we wait for the postman, but alas without avail. We are, of course, quite convinced that you have gathered all the required papers correctly, but we would prefer to have received them by now. The Hilfsverein cannot start anything without having concrete eveidence in their hands. Today is Monday evening. Yesterday, Sunday, we actually did not have the usual amount of visitors. Only Mrs. Trompeter came to see us, and she too is anxiously waiting for mail from her Henno, because he is the one and only she has got, although she does get on very well with her sister. Well, what else can I report? We are keeping reasonably well except that,

lately, we seem to have been overcome by a longing of exceptional intensity. We can hardly await the moment of our re-union. Last year it was already our most ardent wish to have been re-united with you all. In the meantime another long, long year has passed, but in spite of that we will not give up hope, that G'd will bring us together again. May be even by Whitsun. One can only say, miracles have happened before. We trust in G'd and, as usual, he will guard us and help us soon.

Dear Lottie, have you had a letter from Miss Ehmke yet? She said she will write to you. How are you otherwise? How is work? What other news is there? When is Martin coming? He probably has not got the faremoney for the passage. Dear Adele, don't get jealous, now it's your turn? How did the Gateaus turn out? Have you understood all the directions I have given you? Mutti has in the meantime prepared many more recipes. Mutti will not divulge them, however, only when she is safely

in America will she let you have them, and as you know, once Mutti has made up her mind, nothing will move her. No amount of talking will have any effect. The completion of this letter I will postpone until tomorrow's mail.

Well, we have waited, nothing has come. In that case a few more lines to Sally. Dear Sally, on April 4th it will be 3 years since you left for your new homeland. If one were to try and evaluate, what you have achieved in those short years, it would hardly be possible. Only through your own effort and diligent application have you been able to satisfy all the demands you were called upon to fulfill. We have only one wish. May you be successful in all your endeavours and may we be lucky enough to be with you all soon, to spend the rest of our lives in uninterrupted happiness and joy. All our love and many kisses,

your parents,

Mutti Papa

Just as I finished the letter, the new affidavits arrived and we were very surprised. I immediately went to the Hilfsverein. Although it was rather late I just managed to get in. They recommended to apply to the Consul straight away. We hope that we should be lucky enough not to wait long for a decision and that the Consul will find everything in good order. Dear Sally, first of all our sincere thanks for your efforts up to now. We only hope it should lead to a successful outcome. Also our thanks to Mr. Rubin. Now, some news! Today I met Julius Rosenthal at the Hilfsverein. He had his medical today. His visa was promised to him on the 24th March and he hopes to board ship on May 24th. He is very cross with you. You have never written to him ever since you left. Before he leaves, he promised to say good-bye. As Mutti's birthday is tomorrow, the 12th March, a better present she could not have wished for. So once again our love and many kisses.

To a speedy re-union!

Mutti Papa

A small photo of Mutti.

Sixth letter of March 29, 1941

Dearest Children,

Although we are without mail from you since March 11th, we still write every week, so that you should receive a letter from us every week. Just to write about our well-being is really not important enough. Everything is proceeding well. The ever-present desire to hear positively from the Consul are still with us. As I only handed in the affidavits last week, I have already, yesterday Wednesday the 26th March, received a reply from the Consulate. They would like to know whether, too, the daughters are in employment? How much they earn and how much their savings are? Today,I went again to the Hilfsverein. They are sending another telegram to you. Please do as they ask, immediately. The contents will read that everything has gone through conscientiously, but it is apparently not quite sufficient evidence that we might not, at one time, become a burden to the social services of the country. Every little

thing has to be fought for, nothing is made easy for one. I hope that you will be able to rectify this matter.

Dear Adele, should you happen to meet Mrs. Feibel, the sister of Gross, you can tell her that she has received the immigration papers from her daughter. Please give her our regards. By the time you receive this letter, a Miss Drucker will have arrived in New York. She will have regards from us to you. The address is: Miss Rosa Drucker, c/o Max Drucker, 3165 29th St., Long Island, N.Y.C. USA. Anyhow, there is plenty of time for you to go there. Presumably, she will only arrive at the end of April. What else is news? What do you hear from Martin? Every day we wait for news of Martin's arrival. Are we giving way to false hopes? Fourteen days from today Easter will be here again and as ever, all alone. We only hope and wish that next year we shall be together again. In the hope that this letter reaches you in the best

of health, we send you our love and many kisses,
also to Martin, Uncle Simon, Aunt Rosa and
family, Miss Holzmann,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Mrs. Timberg sends her love.

Seventh letter of April 3, 1941

Dearest Children,

Already at the start of this letter I have difficulties of how to begin, as we have had no mail since 11th March. Because of this we are rather worried, particularly as we write every week. We must assume that you get our letters regularly. Your silence with regard to the absence of any letters, we hope has no sinister reason. You are probably too busy and therefore little time to write. It is terribly important for us that you write more and more often. In the meantime you received another telegram, in which we asked you to send us proof of you girl's earnings in order to submit this additional information to the Consul. You should have done this at the time, so no precious time would have been lost. It drags on and on, quite unnecessarily. Because of this we do not seem to be making progress. Sally should not have mentioned you in the first place. It would have been sufficient without that. Well, there is no use to be annoyed about it. The main thing is

that you do this speedily, so that we can make up for lost time. You probably want to know how we are and the state of our health. Anyhow, we are so far alright and also healthwise. Mutti is very busy with spring-cleaning and for the festivals and there is a great upheaval. You remember, when Mutti has made up her mind to do something there is no stopping her: Of course, I am helping a little, because Mutti must not work too hard. Now I am breaking off to wait for the mail and then continue.

Well, here I am again and the waiting has paid off, because on Friday April 4th towards the evening we got your letter of the 1st March. We are very pleased. First of all, Mutti thanks you for your good wishes to her birthday and hopes that all your wishes come to fruition. This time Mutti did not celebrate. We only hope that we shall soon have the opportunity to make up for all the missed celebrations. Now, I shall try to answer all the questions

you have asked.

Dear Adele, you are informing us that you have booked the passage for us; that must be a mistake on your part. Had you actually done so that would have conceivably, been the most helpful. We would have been much further by now, because here there are none to be had at the moment. You mention, that you could not get all the money together. It is quite amazing that you were able to get as much as you did. I may assume, though, that the missing amount will not create any obstacles in our emigration efforts. The worries that you have about our medicals cause a great deal of concern. We will have to pray to G'd and hope for the best. Now, the main thing is to have the papers in order and provide proof of yours and Lottie's earnings and a booked passage. Then and only then can we start something. All this will have to reach us very, very quickly.

Today we learned that Miss Grau, the sister-in-law of Mr. Lewin, left for the States about 3

weeks ago. The lady did not say good-bye to us. In spite of this, I hope she will pass on our regards. Perhaps she was cross, because we did not invite her home at the time, but it was not possible just then. Now, my dear Sally, with your lines we were particularly pleased and would love to see them in every letter because they give us new strength to face the future. Hopefully, it won't be too long before our intention will have turned to reality. About Martin's future we are very worried, and are really surprised that he has still not had an opportunity to get to you. Dear Lottie, also many thanks for your lines, even though you wrote only very little. So you think I should now show what I am really made of, with regard to our emigration. I can assure you, it will not depend on me. Whatever has to be done on this end will be done. Unfortunately, despite all my efforts, it is entirely out of my hands. We are pleased to hear that you are otherwise alright. That your job is a difficult one with little wages, is disturbing

to hear, yet, you should be satisfied. It will be alright in time. In this spirit we send you all our love and kisses, also to uncle and aunt, as well as all their children; Max, Rosa and Hedy, Mrs. Neumann and all friends,

Mutti Papa

Our love and kisses to Martin. A Mr. Salinger, who worked with Sally at the time and was a representative at Fisher & Wolf, sends Sally his regards. Perhaps Martin could write a few lines himself.

Eighth letter of April 14, 1941

Dearest Children,

Your letter of 18th March we received on 9th April and did it find us in the best of health. Because of the Holydays it was not possible to answer you any sooner. Well, we have had very enjoyable first Holydays, except that we had tremendous pangs of longing, particularly on those evenings. We only thought of former times, but, alas, they will never be with us again. Yet, we still hope that we will soon see each other again. Unfortunately, it is not up to us. We are ready at any time and can hardly wait for this day. I hope you have done everything at your end, which should expedite reaching our goal sooner. We know that all this causes you a lot of bother and is connected with a lot of expenses. You will then rightly claim that you have got 'dear' parents. Yes, in life, parents and children do not have it easy. There are always demands on both sides. Sometimes they are of a lighter nature,

sometimes they are more difficult. In our case, we realise, you have a very complicated problem to solve.

Until now the Holydays were quite pleasant, except for the weather, which is still quite cold. Dear Adele, you are writing very little of late and according to the dates you write only once in 14 days, but I still write every week. We know that you and all the others have only very little spare time and are sure there is no other reason for it, but frankly we would like more to read. Today, Tuesday, I went once again to the Hilfsverein to have our passports extended and our permit of residence confirmed. I have today spoken to Mrs. Propper, as she works for the Hilfsverein, and she sends her regards. So does Mrs. Timberg, she will write to you soon. At the moment I would have no more news. Perhaps we will get mail soon, so that I will have material to reply to. In the meantime we send our love and kisses, as well as to Martin. Regards to uncle and aunt and family and family Rubin, not to forget Miss Holzmann.

We hope you have had pleasant Holydays. With us it was all very nice.

From your parents.

Dear Max,

Many thanks for your lines contained in the last letter. We were very pleased to know that you have not forgotten us. We also talk a lot about you and your wife and your little baby-girl. About the name of your daughter, we were rather intrigued. It sounds very pretty. I hope we will soon have the opportunity to be together again. Naturally, you as young people, will find it easier to get accustomed to your new surroundings and establish roots in your new country, also language-wise. It will be much different for us. The acclimatisation and strangeness will be much more difficult for us. At the moment I will not break my head over this, but leave it all for the future. Otherwise everything is carrying on in the usual way. We are at the moment busy preparing the papers for our emigration, except we are short of a few documents. Well, the main thing is the passage, which is

very short in supply. In spite of all this, we do not lose hope that we will get every thing together shortly. So our love and kisses to you, your beloved wife and baby daughter. Regards to Hermann Spritzer and all friends,

your Uncle.

In the meantime it's Thursday. My dear ones, we have not received any mail this week, whereas we got a letter from uncle Josef in La Paz. He wrote that they are all well and have fitted in to their new environment reasonably well. He is already in the fur trade again and has a small shop with a partner from Vienna. Uncle is very cross with you, because you have never written to him. He did not deserve this. He seems to be under the impression that we are already on the way to you. Unfortunately, this is not so. How we wished it were so. Now, my dear ones, I have one request: please write to uncle in La Paz. At Sally, he is particularly mad, as he did not even add greetings on Lottie's letter of last year. So, don't forget

and write. Mrs. Danziger sends her regards and would like to hear from you. In the meantime nothing has happened. From the Consul we have had no news. Also nothing about our passage. Once more our love and kisses and to a speedy re-union,

Mutti Papa

Ninth letter of April 23, 1941

Dearest Children,

Your letter of the 2nd April we received today. You can imagine what joy there was, particularly, with the snapshot. You all look really very well and was it for us a lovely present so soon after the Holydays. Also the contents of the letter made us very happy, if only because Martin is keeping well and he received so many presents. He was very lucky to have met a man like that. Dear Adele, we are hoping that you will be successful in bringing your friend over, then we would all be very happy. I have got a feeling that you will manage it. In any case, you should set everything in motion to send him an affidavit. We were also very happy to hear Martin will soon honour you with a visit. And now, to the Seder evenings. We were extremely astonished by uncle Simon's behaviour. You can now see the differences between brothers. When you consider that we had the same educational background, and yet are so different in so many other ways. I am

deeply shocked and saddened. You don't have to mention this to uncle. We have celebrated the evenings as best we could, but with our thoughts only with you. Many a tear has dropped into our glasses. May the Almighty help us that we perhaps celebrate Whitsun together with you. That was, of course, your wish, but unfortunately that will be impossible. Currently it is very cold. Because of that my rheumatism gives me bother. Nanny and husband and children, as well as Dora, Lotte, Bertha, Martin all alright. Sonja has not written for a long time, but Samuel has written.

My dear Children,

You were very pleased to receive Mutti's photo and you would like to know why I did not enclose one of myself. Mutti had this photo taken secretly, so as to surprise you and me. I will also have one taken of me shortly. Uncle Yossele is with Frieda. Over the winter he stayed in bed. I shall post this letter tomorrow, Thursday. Has Miss Grau arrived yet? Although she never said good-bye, I would still like

to give her our regards. Mutti spoke to Mrs. Danziger today, she too sends her regards. Do you or Max ever write to Paula? The sister of Hannchen is very cross with you, because you never acknowledged the receipt of the photos. I hope you made the right choice for the Seder evenings. We still assume you gave uncle preference, in spite of everything. Mr. Zucker is not really very competent to conduct the services. Mrs. Unger had her medical at the Consulate today and will get her visa on the 30th April. Let's hope that she will be able to start her journey soon. Fredi came to see us today. We have shown him your photo. He envies you greatly. Otherwise everything is alright. This week we had a 'szude' in our place. Our lodger's son's flat is too small, so we had it here. That was a pleasant change. Now I am really tired and would just like to send you our love and kisses and hope for a speedy re-union. Love and kisses to Max and family, Mr. Hermann Spritzer, family Zucker, not to forget Miss Holzmann.

Mutti Papa

Tenth letter of May 23, 1941*

My dear Lotti, my dear Miss Adele,

On the 28th February 1941, I wrote to you a rather long letter, but it seems that you never received it. At the same time I wrote to Olly Saenger, my cosmetics teacher, who also lives in your city and of who I requested to send me my diploma. I will send you a copy of that letter and ask you to comply with my request in it. In my situation many changes have taken place. My darling Leo died suddenly in Porto Allegre of a severe heart attack. All my plans have now altered. I can hardly believe that he is no more, and suffer greatly from this reality. Also Mushi has passed away on May 5th. So everything is vanishing, everything and everybody who was near and dear to one.- I am happy, though - and that is no comparison - that you are keeping alright. I wish you, with all my heart, that it may long continue to be so. Hopefully, your dear parents will manage to join you very, very soon. For this I wish you 'Good Luck'. I am, at this

*This letter has pages one and two missing. That is discernible from the censorship number which clearly points to three pages. The writer by the name Lissi is not known to me.

very moment, at your dear parents' home and can confirm their well-being. They both have not changed in looks. I have just read your last letter and saw the photo with all 3 of you and I liked it very much. You all look terrific. That is exactly how I imagined it. Manasses in Buenos Aires are now doing reasonably well. They have to work very hard, but that is good. From Friedchen, I have never heard anymore. Dear Lotte, please write to me a long letter. You can easily enclose it with the others, but you can also write directly to me. Now, my dears, keep well.

Love,

yours, Lissi,

who used to think a lot of you and still does.

Eleventh letter of May 30, 1941*

Dearest Children,

Although I have already acknowledged your letter of the 30th April, you will see from it that Miss Ehmke has honoured us with a visit. We are, thank G'd, alright. Yes, we are alright healthwise and I now have a nice job as homeworker for very elegant gents' suits. Unbelievable, I tell you. My boss is very pleased with my work, and so am I. My work consists in the making-up of jackets only, very high class! From Mr. and Mrs. Fleischer, we still got a letter from Frankfurt on Main, and the style was really nice. He promised me to contact you immediately on his arrival. Mr. Fleischer has asked me to write to you, requesting you to help him in his present situation, so that it is possible that he may ask you for a few dollars. Should you be able to oblige, please do so. I hope you will do me this favour, because I would like to keep my promise.

In our matter, we have not heard anymore from the Consulate, although we are eagerly waiting for a call.

*Page 2 is missing in the original of this letter.

Everything is going too slowly for our liking. What is news with you? I hope you are all alright and happy in your new apartment. We now have very nice weather, though still a little cool. Tomorrow is Whitsun Saturday, also for us. I am really pleased to have a chance to have a rest. I had to work very hard lately to be on time for the clients of my boss. Whenever the Holydays come around, we always think and hope that these may be the last we will spend without you. For the time being our wish has not materialised. How is our dear Martin? Why does he not write a few lines occasionally? Why is he so lazy? Anyhow send him our love.

Twelfth letter of June 11, 1941

Dearest Children,

Letting you know that we are alright and hope to hear the same from you. The photo of Aunt Dora we have received and gave us great pleasure. Aunt looks, as usual, very well, even with the slightly forced smile. By now, I am sure, Mrs. Ringel will have arrived in Montevideo, and will have conveyed our regards. It is greatly hoped, that Aunt Dora will write to us. The letter from Hannchen we were given to read as well and found the style and contents very pleasant. While reading it, we had to shed quite a few tears. You were absolutely right, my dear Adele, that you thanked Aunt Rosa for all she does for us.

Now, I have to, regretfully, inform you that we received a refusal from the Consul. I am enclosing this document. You can now see that nothing goes as smoothly as one would like. On Sunday, June 8th, we received the said forms. On Tuesday, I went immediately to the Hilfsverein. Dr. Glase,

the official dealing with my case, was greatly shocked when he saw it. Now, the Hilfsverein will contact the Consul directly. Whether it is going to be of any use is doubtful. Well, I have been told, if the possibility of a deposit of 2,000 dollars were to be available, there might still be a chance. I don't think you will be in a position to get this together. The papers so far submitted are obviously not sufficient to satisfy their requirements. We had high hopes by now that we will soon be together, but fate seems to be against us. Should we not be successful, so we will have to wait until you become wealthy and so able to guarantee our support and maintenance. Anyhow, you must not take it to heart. You might have a word with Mr. Rubin. Only he is in a position to help us. Perhaps Miss Holzmann might have some useful suggestions. I know the difficulties you must have in this matter, but you must not leave a stone unturned and put everything possible in motion to help us. In this spirit I close my letter

with all our love and kisses, also to all the relatives and friends. Our love to Martin,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

My time is nowadays very limited. I have a lot of work and earn good money. No mail so far from you.

Thirteenth letter of June 21, 1941

Dearest Children,

Your letter of June 2nd we received on the 18th in good health. We were particularly happy this time, my dear Sally, to read a few lines from you. At the same time I would like to thank you for your birthday wishes. May all of them come true soon. It is still quite some time to the 3rd of July, but I realise one cannot make it on the exact day one would like. In the meantime, I am sure, you received our wishes to your birthday. Your advice to honour this day especially, we will certainly heed, albeit with the time available to me, which seems to be getting less and less, which also affects my letter-writing. The latter I can only do now and again. Last week we received a letter from Jenni. Unfortunately I missed to answer her straight away and now it will be impossible for me to make up for it. Anyhow, they are well. She asked how you all are. They cannot really forget the old times and admitted that they did not really appreciate them at the time. They are

The weather is beautiful right now. The days will soon shorten again and the nights lengthen. So takes everything its course. Exactly as the years go by, always up and down.

Now, dear Adele, your birthday will be here soon. What could we possibly wish you? First of all, may you enjoy good health. This is the most important thing in life. Secondly, that you may soon find happiness, which you so richly deserve. This we, your very poor but well-meaning parents, are ardently hoping for. Max shares the same birthday with you. To him also our very heartiest congratulation. May he be granted to see his father once more and celebrate it together with him. That is also our wish. Now we send you all our love and many kisses, also to dear Martin, Max, Uncle Simon, Aunt Rosa and children, family Rubin, Martin Unger, Rosa and Hedy, Mrs. Neumann and all friends, from your parents,

Mutt Papa

2 photos enclosed, according to the censors.

Fourteenth letter of July 3, 1941

Dearest Children,

The above date reveals my birthday. Now it is evening, to be exact 10:15, so it is after the celebration, if we can call it such. We have had visits, amongst others, from Nanny, Wolf, Theo. Fanny would have come, but she is away on recuperation. We are still expecting Dora, Lotte and Bertha. They will probably wait for Saturday. There were high jinks. Mutti baked a wonderful gateau. At every bite we thought of you. Otherwise everything went smoothly, if only you were all present; that would have made it perfect. We hope that we will be able to celebrate my next birthday together.

And now to the matter in hand. For the past 4 weeks we have been without mail from you and we are quite worried. We hope that you are all well and are kept very busy. Mr. Fleischer must by now be with you. He was supposed to have conveyed our regards to you. In view of my lack

of time, and being very tired, I am closing to send you our love and kisses, relatives and friends,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Special love to Martin.

Fifteenth letter of July 14, 1941

Dearest Lottie,

Your letter of the 23rd found us in the best of health. For us to read it, however, it was much too short, particularly as we have been waiting for mail for over 5 weeks. Actually, I must admit, I also wrote less than usual. The great heat has also contributed to this. In the evenings I am very tired, although I usually reply promptly. Dear Lottie, that you have changed your job again does not seem to bother [you] much, while we are very worried about it. Also, we cannot understand why Martin is reluctant to come to you. This upsets us greatly and things could perhaps help us, if you were all together. Unfortunately, I have long had my suspicion that he must be quite selfish. Perhaps it may still be possible to change his mind, if you were to try to persuade him. Has Sally tried to speak to him about this. We are afraid he might miss his chance forever. You can send him this letter to read. Maybe it will have the right effect at the last moment. That Adele's friend is

intending to join her is very good news, and her wish would then be fulfilled. Hope everything will turn out for the best.

Now my dear Lottie, you think I should try again with our emigration. Well, this has been taken out of our hands completely. The last letter from the Consul I have sent you by recorded delivery. You are the only ones who have to carry on in this matter from your end. One hears so much that everything now goes via Washington. It is only from there that instructions have to be given. It is still possible to get a visa from the Embassy, but it is all up to you. Tonight a friend of ours left. I gave him your address and he gave me the name and address of his friend. His own name is Tintenfass. What a name, eh? On July 18th he is supposed to board at Barcelona. The ship is called 'Sevilla' and will probably arrive at the beginning of August. The address of his relative is: Dr. Joseph Broadman, 110 West 42nd St., New York; telephone, Wisconsin 7-5445. We have also sent our love with a

Mrs. Farber, who said she will write to you. I hope she will keep her promise.

In general, we are keeping well. Family Bickel are still living with us. Everything and everybody is alright. Otherwise I have no news, except it is by now 10:45 and I am exceedingly tired. Why did you not actually mention Miss Ehmke in your regards, particularly as she wrote to you directly. And now, stay well, all of you. Love and kisses also from Mutti. She is greatly looking forward to your long-promised chocolate. This time I have not written to Sally or Adele. They may, of course, read this letter. I would not have written anything different to them. Mrs. Unger, mother of Martin, hopes to leave in August. Regards to uncle, aunt and children, Max, Rosa and little Hedy. Nanny, Wolf, Theo, Fanny, Bertha, Martin, Dora, Lotte Schorr, all send their regards,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Sixteenth letter of August 7, 1941

Dearest Children,

Two weeks have gone by since we last heard from you. We are always terribly worried and waiting for your letters has become very nerve-wrecking. We know that your spare-time is very measured, but yet, you must not forget us, particularly writing. You might find this reproach unjustified, but it is true. I hope you will not be cross with me. It's alright. Now I can tell you that Mrs. Unger has left Berlin today and can, at long last, with G'd's help, look forward to reach her long-awaited goal. Saying good-bye was not easy for us. Many a tear was shed on both sides. We did not have any luck with our emigration, but we are always pleased when our friends have managed it and it gives us an opportunity to send our love to you through them. She goes on board on the 20th August or beginning September. On August 5th I went once again to the Hilfsverein, but it was of little use. They gave me a circular in which the new rules for

emigration were made known. You have probably seen it already. Everything has to start from the beginning again. In the meantime we have no alternatives, but to carry on waiting and hoping. Dear Lottie, this week a former teacher of yours, Miss Elias, came to see us, collecting for something or other, and Mutti reminded her of you. Mutti also showed her your picture, She remembered you well, but inspite of it, she sends her best regards. This is what she looks like now.

Summer will soon be gone and it has started to rain quite a lot. It is also quite cool and the Holydays will soon be here again; only a very few weeks away. Well, what can we realistically expect from you until then? First of all, we would like you towrite more often. Secondly, to try everything in your power to expedite our emigration. You must find out every detail and get all the right information, so that there will be no more hold-ups. There is one more possibility via Cuba. It is only a matter of a small trifle, a mere

6,000 dollars deposit, besides the cost of the passage. Anyhow, it is returnable. Perhaps that could be considered. Now it is Thursday again. Tomorrow, Friday, I would like to post the letter and I am also very tired. No news otherwise. Our love and kisses to you, as to Martin, Uncle Simon, Aunt Rose, Max, Rosa and baby, Mrs. Neumann, friends and relatives. Love from Nanny, Wolf, Fanny, Theo, Dora, Lotte, Bertha and Martin,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Dear Adel, Lottie and Salli, I am very happy to hear that you are all, thank G'd, keeping well. I am also reasonably alright. I have a big favour to ask of you: please write to Paula, because we are very worried and also let me have Elfrie's address. To Max I have written about this before, but have had no reply. I thank you for doing this. Love and kisses from all the family,

Yours Nanny,

Love and kisses to Max and Family.

Seventeenth letter of August 18, 1941

Dearest Children,

Your letter of the 28th July we received on August 15th. We were very happy to hear from you after at least 3 weeks. First of all, many thanks for your good wishes to our wedding anniversary. The 28th is actually the right date. We will, naturally, not celebrate this year. Only when the good Lord decides to let us live and we are all re-united again, only then will we celebrate. Dear Adele, about the promised chocolate you never sent, Mutti is not cross at all. Don't laugh, but Aunt Spritzer, with whom we correspond regularly, sent us a gift-parcel. Bonbons, biscuits, 200 gr. flour, 3 strips of chocolate and a small cake. We appreciated this greatly. We have shared it with all our relatives. Mutti also took some of it to Aunt Naftali in hospital. We thought it was very nice of her to still think of us. On Saturday, we also received a very nice letter from her. Her sons write very complimentary about you to her. Today we got a letter from Uncle Josef. He told

us that he got a letter from Lottie. He is doing very well and has gone on holidays for 10 days. Quite remarkable in so short a time. Now, My dear Adele, your job in a factory as a machinist does not really please us. But I suppose there is no alternative and particularly in this heat. It must be quite difficult for you. I know enough about this from my own experience. It is to your credit, that you have mastered it so quickly. I would never have thought you could manage it. Well, in life one has to get used to anything, Let's hope the time will come that this period will only have been a bad dream.

You wrote, that another year has passed in your personal calendar, but you find yourself still in the same spot. You will see your luck will turn one day. Of course, you would like to have been married by now, but in these uncertain times, I don't think you are missing anything. The passages for us have certainly not been booked. Only for those who have visas, are passages booked. This week I am going to the Hilfsverein and will ask them to get on with

everything. The photo of Gina we gave to her mother, who visited on Saturday. For the regards from Mr. and Mrs. Fleischer we thank you and return them herewith. Perhaps he can write to me personally. Has uncle met Fleischer yet? For your information, I am enclosing a form, which tells you exactly what is required now for our emigration. Otherwise we are alright. For today, I am closing this letter and send you our love and kisses, also to Martin and relatives.

Please reply soon.

Mutti Papa

Eighteenth letter of September 1, 1941

Dearest Children,

It is now the 4th week since we last heard from you. We know very well, that not through ill-will, but because you have enough to cope with yourselves, but yet, waiting for mail from you has become intolerable. Notwithstanding, that I have to lengthen the interval of writing to you. I used to write once a week, now it is only every 10 days. If you would do the same, it would be much better. Otherwise we are very well and hope to hear from you. Are you all well? Have you all got jobs? Has Miss Fleischer married yet? I would like to hear from family Fleischer. Mutti spoke to Aunt Rosa today and did she want to know, whether you still hear from Hannchen. She would like to hear from you. She sends her love.

Have you done anything for our emigration yet? From here we cannot do anything at all. I hope, that you do not miss an opportunity, to bring this matter to a speedy and successful conclusion. We are actually being laughed at, by those who are still here, because they

maintain, that where you have 3 children together in the same place, and nobody left here, that we should have been with you long, long ago. In the meantime Mrs. Unger will have arrived, Miss Zucker, the niece of Mrs. Bickel, who will contact you, and so will Mrs. Weiss, the mother of Blüchen, who will arrive any day now.

We are in no way jealous and don't begrudge anybody their luck. But it is a fact that we have no luck at all in this matter. It is all up to you to clear up any mistake you might have made. Now, my dear Lottie, although your birthday is still 26 days away, I would, already, like the opportunity to send you our heartiest good wishes. Mutti and I wish you all the very best to the coming festival. May we be granted to be re-united with all of you very, very soon. At the same time, I would like to wish you a happy year and all relatives. I am going to send this letter off immediately. Today is the 2nd September and still no mail from you. Once more our love and kisses,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Dear Adele, that you now are a raincoat machinist sounds very good. Has the heat relented yet? We have not had any heatwave here. In fact, I feel quite cold already. Even in the Summer, I wear 2 pairs of socks and still did not feel hot. You write, that my cousin Leah is a bitch; that puzzles me as I remember her as a very nice person. May be she has changed. Has she ever mentioned me? Have you ever visited family Rosenzweig? They would welcome it immensely, I am sure, because he first met you when you were 6 months old in 1912/13. Yesterday, I interrupted this letter. Today, Sunday, I am continuing.

Mutti has just come from visiting Nanny. Frieda wrote, that her husband is ill. In 14 days our festivals are with us, hopefully pleasant ones and still nice weather. Yesterday and today, the weather is beautiful. Dear Lottie, you would like photos from us. Unfortunately, we have no patience at the moment for this sort of thing. Perhaps at a later date. Please don't be cross. We are pleased that you are all together and live in harmony with each other. Just

Martin should not stay alone. We would have been far less worried, if Martin would have been with you by now. Mrs. Timberg is very cross with Hannchen, because she does not write anymore. Mrs. Lauterman thanks you for your regards. That you have not heard from the Fleischers anymore, surprises me very much. That's all for today. Love and kisses. I only hope that I will be able to write many more letters to you. That is our innermost wish for the New Year.

From your parents,

Mutti Papa

Twentieth letter of September 13, 1941

Dearest Children,

Again 14 days have passed since we heard from you. We know, of course, that your time is taken up with your work and therefore no time to write. As is possible, I write once a week, and that I shall try to keep up. About us, I cannot really tell you anything new. As before, we are keeping well, only the weather leaves a lot to be desired. I feel already so cold, that I have changed to my Winter-clothes. Yes, one is getting a little older, particularly with all the disappointment of our emigration. Many people have managed, only we have either lacked the know-how or have just missed the boat. We put our faith in G'd come what may. We have long since resigned ourselves to our fate. I am not blaming you, but you obviously did not have enough time to inform yourselves of the best advice.

But not everything is lost. Perhaps you can try again, only this time with much greater intensity. With the help of your Committee, which has all the

know-how, it should be possible. But please be quick! I am sure Mrs. Unger has by now arrived and will have conveyed our personal greetings. Has Miss Zucker written to you yet? Have you heard anything from Mr. Tintenfass? The address I have written to you before, but I repeat here again: Dr. Joseph Broadman, 110 West 42nd St., New York. This is his cousin. From Aunt Spritzer we never heard again. Uncle Josef has also not replied anymore. In the coming week , we will be celebrating our festivals. Hopefully, good ones. Our very innermost wishes are that our prayers, for all of you to stay well and us, too, may be answered. But most of all, that we should soon be united with you all. As you can see, I am writing a few lines every night and always think, may be tomorrow we will have mail from you. Tomorrow, Wednesday, I will definitely post this letter. I meet the father of Dr. Landau quite often, usually every Saturday. You could send him our regards and also from his father. Now, I really have no more news. Love and kisses, also to Martin and all relatives,

Mutti Papa

Twenty-first letter of September 26, 1941*

Dearest Children,

Your loving letter of the 2nd September we received on the 18th and found us in very good spirits. The Holydays we spent reasonably well, according to prevailing circumstances. We hope that you too have spent them well. First and foremost that you have prayed a lot and with good effect, that we, with G'd's help be re-united in the very near future. Dear Adele, what you write about my complaints to Aunt Spritzer is not quite correct. True, I did write to her that you do not write often enough, as you used to, but I have also given the reason for it at the same time. So that is a misunderstanding, although it is not right of Salli not to write at all. Mutti is particularly upset about it, though she realises, he must be working very hard. But she expects to have a few lines from him occasionally. Before you arrived there, he had to write every time himself. Even then his time was limited, but yet he found some sometimes. Dear Adele, you have our permission to show him this letter.

*This is the last letter of their father saved by Adele and Lottie.

The letter from Fleischer I have read. I actually thought that I would hear more from him. I also thought he would give you a tip or two regarding our emigration. Well, that's life! Once you think you are quite safe, you forget everything else. Anyhow, I thank him for his letter. At the moment I cannot reply to him, only after the end of the Holydays. Send him and his wife our regards. Dear Adele, in your letter you wrote that you had another cold. Not your old complaint, I hope? I also suffer quite often with catarrh and plenty of headaches, because of it. While you still have hot weather, I feel the cold quite badly already and dress as if it was Winter, although the sun sometimes shines, but not in our home. I have got plenty of work and am quite satisfied. In the meantime, it is quite late again. For the moment, no more news. Our love and kisses, also to Martin and relatives,

from your parents,

Mutti Papa

Twenty- second letter of October 11, 1941, written by Mrs. Rosa Timberg

My darlings Adele, Lottie and Sally,

At last, at last after 2 months I am taking time to answer your loving letters and confirm receipt of the photos. Who knows when I will have time again to write to you? I am also spiritually and mentally quite drained. My dear Adele, I was satisfied with only the very few lines and had much joy from the photos and cried a lot. Little Josi has, touch wood, grown into a real man. Will I ever see him again? I doubt very often that I will. Hannele looks beautiful. How happy we would be, if we could be with you, in spite of your hard work. This longing is driving us mad. To the New Year I would still, though a little late, like to send you my best wishes. We have also had Yom Kippur, a Yom Kippur on which we could bare our hearts and thoughts to G'd, to pray and plead, tearfully to him. May the Almighty hear our prayers and re-unite us all with our families, Amen! And now to you especially,

Adele and Sally. I have read your letter today and you, dear Sally, have hit the nail on the head. Had you not relied on the Hilfsverein and sent the fully paid boattickets, your dear parents would have been with you by now.

I do not wish to make your hearts heavier, than the already are, but Papa and Mama have become very depressed and are crying their hearts out for you, all day and every day, and are now filled with grave doubts, that they will ever see you again. (I too sometimes feel the same). I would like to give a small example: If, G'd forbid, someone in the family falls very ill, there is a Yiddish expression: "Man musz gehen and einreiszen die Shul". Translated it means: One has to go to Synagogue to pray, pray, and pray again, so long and so loud, until G'd hears you and sends his healing. That is, exactly, what you should have done. You should have gone from one relative to another, from one friend to another, from one government department to another, sometimes perhaps sacrificing your pride and not

let loose until you had achieved what it required.

Even at this late juncture, do not rest and set all wheels in motion, so that, with G'd's help, you might still manage it somehow. May be, you will have to take 8-14 days off work in order to go from one place to another. The 100 dollars you intended to send me as a deposit, rather use them for your dear parents. To me they would not be of any use at the moment. Also Paul and Fella wanted to deposit 150 dollars on my behalf. Tell Hanni, that she should rather give it to you at the moment. You all have, thank G'd, work and could in time pay it back. Miss Grau would also give you 10 dollars, so that in time you could get it together. Now, my dear ones, please do not be cross with me about this reproach. I really mean it well with all of you and only want the best. It is now 11:30 at night and I am still writing this letter. Duties! my dears, duties! I hope you understand me?

And now to you, my dear darling Hannile. It's been a long, long time since I have had any letters from

you and who knows, when I will have time again to sit down and write. Your 4 photos I have received with great joy and shed many tears over them. Little Josi has become a man and you look so pretty, whereas we have grown old and exhausted. Will I ever see you again? I sometimes doubt it. Don't be cross of what I am going to write. Should I not have the good fortune of seeing my child again, I know in my heart, dear Hanni, that you will make him a good mother and guide him sensibly to achieve his goal. Only one thing I ask of you, please see to it that he should acquire a good and practical profession, so that he might later be able to have his own business. Of course, I realize, that a good worker also needs a commercial education, otherwise he will never get on. Think of our brothers, who were never able to advance themselves and were forever employees. That was, because they lacked the commercial know-how. Don't be cross with me, if I write this to you. I have gone very nervous, Hannile.

From Adolf we have received mail after one year.

He works at Nathan's. Alex will definitely not write on, the lout! Frieda will by now be with Nathan. Aunt Minna has died of cancer. Heinz and family will soon change their address. From Erna the news is bad. Moishele and Fredi are in the hospital where Heinz was. She writes tearful letters and she is all alone. I do what I can to console her. To the New Year I want to wish you belatedly, all the very best. Also to Yom Kippur.

Yes, Yom Kippur was an opportunity to pray and cry to G'd. If there is really a G'd in heaven, he should hear us and bring us all together again, Amen! I also

went to the cemetery and asked our dear parents to guard all their children. I have asked a friend of our late father to say the prayer for the departed and had him mention each one by name. Also at the grave of the late Sami, I asked him for special prayers to be said, and that his right hand may guard his only son, Josi. The same also at Uncle Leo's. Tani is now 3 years old and is she a really lovely and clever child. Regina and Manfred are working, thank G'd, and so are Heinz and Käthe. Sigi is, thank G'd, a strong lad. Senta, too, is working. My hand has gone much worse lately and I suffer quite a lot from it. I will probably have to go to a doctor. Excuse my uneven writing, but I am very much on edge today. It is also 12:30 at night. From Jenni and Heinz I received a letter, but she complained bitterly. She lives with her mother-in-law and she gives her hell. She is very disappointed with the marriage and did she imagine it quite differently. She longs for Regina, Josef, Berthold, Rusja and the lovely little boy. She has written quite often, but

has not received a reply. Now, be well! I embrace and kiss you all, from your ever-loving Rosa. You my darling Josi, be blessed! May G'd bless and guard you on all your ways! May good luck be your steady companion, Amen! Keep well, my child! I am always in my thoughts with you. I embrace and kiss you most dearly and send you a thousand kisses,

yours forever loving,

Muttichen

All aunts and uncles wish you the same.

Twenty - third letter of November 20, 1941, written by Mrs. Timberg

My Dears All,

It has been a long, long time since I last heard from you. Did you not get my letters? That your dear parents do not live there anymore, I am sure, you know by now. Regretfully I have not received any mail from them yet, otherwise I would have written to you sooner. What's news with you? Why do you let me wait for mail so long? If you would know, how anxiously one is wait- for news from you. Channele, and you too do not take time to write? From our dear Heinz I had not had any mail yet either. From dear Erna, I received a letter at long last. She is very, very depressed and complains about the same illness as Heinz. Manfred and Regina are working, thank G'd. May it be G'd's will and stay that way for a long time. Is there a G'd after all? I often doubt it. Our darling Tani was sick for about a fort- night, 8 days with high temperature. Now she is on the way to recovery again. Senta has been ill for over a week and is she also recovering.

Well, of myself, I am not even going to talk about. What I would really like to do, is to crawl into a corner and close my eyes for ever, because I have so little hope to see my one and only darling child again, and all of you. And yet, I pray every day to our dear departed parents, that they spread their guarding hands over us, Amen!

Dear Adele, I intend to go to the Hilfsverein in the next few days regarding your dear parents. Would you only not have relied on the Hilfsverein! I would have been happy if I had better news for you. Channele, tell all our relatives that family Gross, Jenni and Heinz send their love. How is my darling Josi? Tell him I send him a thousand kisses. Tell him to pray and pray for our well-being and and for a speedy re-union, Amen! Aunt Frieda has happily arrived and is with her children. The joy was very great. Adolf has written to us already. Dear Adele, family Wolf send their regards. That's all for today. I have no more patience. Keep well. all of you, and let us hope that a 'Ness'* will occur, so that we will all see each other again one

*Ness is Yiddish for miracle.

day, Amen! This is my innermost wish. Love and kisses to you all, with all my heart, from

your disconsolate

Rosa, Senta, Regina, Manfred and family

Please write soon. Why does Max not write?

Twenty-fourth letter (undated), written by Mrs. Timberg*

And you, my darling Channele, how are you and my darling Josi? It is a long, long time since I heard from you. I, myself, am rather down - emotionally - and can hardly summon up enough strength to write. My heart is letting me down sometimes and my stomach is not quite in order either. I think I have got ulcers, because sometimes, it just refuses to accept any food at all. The least excitement upsets it, and of these I have many. Channele, do you still remember when we had a long conversation on the telephone, some time ago, you told me about a bad dream you had and I mocked you? Well, this time I had the same dream but, unfortunately, it turned into reality. Heinz and family are so-so, likewise Regina and family. We will, in the near future, travel to Mohr. He writes very little. Have you ever written to Grunards? Could they not help us? Oh, I long to be with you again! My heart tells me, that I won't see you, my darlings, again. The only consolation I have is, that you will be a good mother to my darling child. See to it, that he acquires a

*Pages 1 and 2 are missing from the original letter.

good trade or profession, so that he one day be independent, Amen! Now, keep well, my darling, darling Channele. Be strong and healthy! May G'd keep you and guard you and give you contentment. We love and kiss you with all our hearts,

yours, ever-so-sad,

Rosa and relatives.

And now to you, my one and only darling child. How are you, my lovely? Are you well? Do you learn diligently? Your loving Mummy longs so much for you. Pray, my child! Pray every day, morning, noon and evening for your little Mummy, aunts, uncles, and all relatives. Pray, in the hope that one day we will be re-united, Amen! Amen! As long as my eyes are still open, I will always bless you. May G'd guard you and bless all your efforts, Amen! May all your efforts be blessed with success, Amen! Never forget your little Mummy. Be good and listen to all, who are involved in your education. Listen to Auntie Hanni, and obey all their wishes, because they only want the best for you, just as I do. Oh, I would love to be with you! Now, keep well! Be strong and healthy. I embrace you a thousand

times,

your everloving

Mummy, Aunt Senta, Regina, Käthe, Uncle Manfred, Heinz, Walter, Sigi and families and all friends.

Keep well!